

CASCOM Initiatives in Support of Total Army Readiness

■ By Maj. Gen. Darrell K. Williams

The Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) and Sustainment Center of Excellence (SCOE) at Fort Lee, Virginia, and Fort Jackson, South Carolina, play a key role in assisting the operational Army in meeting the chief of staff of the Army's imperative of readiness.

The SCOE provides world-class sustainment professionals and leaders to the operational force through professional military education and advanced individual training. It is home to the largest noncommissioned officer academy in the Army, 36 percent of enlisted military occupational specialties, and 40 percent of Army warrant officer specialties. In fiscal year (FY) 2017, SCOE schools will deliver more than 113,000 trained professionals to the force.

Readiness Initiatives Overview

In addition to providing sustainers to the force, the SCOE has several major initiatives that will significantly affect readiness. The Army G-4, CASCOM, and the Quartermaster School are collaborating on innovative education solutions for Global Combat Support System-Army (GCSS-Army). A new 3-D virtual change of command inventory application will further support property accountability efforts.

Transportation readiness efforts include the Deployment Process Modernization Office (DPMO) and proponency activities. DPMO is playing a critical role as the Army places renewed emphasis on expeditionary capabilities. The Unit Movement Officer Game that is being developed will take these lessons and provide them to the field in a

practical toolkit.

The Ordnance School is improving organic maintenance capabilities through the development of three ongoing initiatives: the Maintenance Readiness Playbook, the Direct Recovery Operations (DRO) Application, and the Unit Diagnostics Immersion Program (UDIP).

As the Army transitions its personnel activities to the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A), the Adjutant General School, in coordination with the Army G-1, is developing new training modules to support the transformational leap in business practices that IPPS-A represents.

The Financial Management (FM) School has developed, piloted, and launched in record time an S-8 gunnery training program to support the newly established brigade combat team and sustainment brigade S-8 position.

Each of these specific initiatives will have a direct impact on increasing the organic capabilities of units in the operational force. They demonstrate CASCOM's commitment to improving Army readiness.

Quartermaster Initiatives

As of February 2017, the Army has completed the GCSS-Army Wave 1 fielding and approximately 60-percent of the Wave 2 fielding. In support of the fielding, the CASCOM G-3 has developed an enterprise resource planning (ERP) education strategy. The Quartermaster School's efforts to support the Army's fielding of GCSS-Army align with the CASCOM ERP education strategy.

In 2013, automated logistical spe-



The Combined Arms Support Command's commitment to improving Army readiness is evident through its many initiatives to increase the capabilities of sustainment units.

specialists were the first to transition their training from the Standard Army Retail Supply System to the warehouse module and in 2014 from the Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced to the plant maintenance module.

Unit supply specialists transitioned in April 2016, at which time the school trained students on both Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced and GCSS-Army. Since October 2016, the school has focused its education on GCSS-Army. This enables readiness by ensuring all advanced individual training supply Soldiers arrive at their operational assignments trained on and proficient in the latest system.

Soldiers will use the same new equipment training (NET) package the program manager uses during fielding to minimize trouble during the transition from the schoolhouse to operational units.

The CASCOT G-3 modified the training package, added more simulation, and called it NET+. The package provides tutorial assistance and is interactive, which allows Soldiers to simulate transaction processing;

however, the Soldier must select the correct answer in order to continue the transaction.

Additionally, the Quartermaster School uses uPerform, a virtual environment that allows Soldiers to walk through transactions using step-by-step instructions and checklists for key functions and reports. The program bridges the gap from the NET+ package to the live GCSS-Army system.

The school is in the process of training instructors on the GCSS-Army live training database. Once the instructor training is complete, the Quartermaster School and training developers will add practical exercises to the lesson plans. Soldiers will continue to train using the NET+ with simulations (crawl), uPerform (walk), and the GCSS-Army live training database (run).

The school is also building a virtual 3-D change of command property accountability resource designed for company-grade leaders. This product, which will be available in both desktop and mobile versions, will enable leaders to practice conducting a change of command inventory

for an arms room, Soldier individual equipment, and a motor pool. It will also provide a common starting point for change of command inventory stakeholders.

The Quartermaster School, in coordination with the CASCOT staff, is providing Soldiers who are well-trained on GCSS-Army by using great instructors, training developers, and training tools. The school continually updates its training and methods of instruction and seeks best practices to train the world's best sustainers.

Transportation Initiatives

The Office of the Chief of Transportation and DPMO are the two principal touch points between the SCOE and the field for transportation activities and functional information. These two organizations affect the Army's ability to project combat power and the long-term readiness of the force.

DPMO, as the Army's user representative, continually gathers feedback from the field in coordination with the joint planning and execution community. Recent DPMO activities include the following:



Spc. Joseph Opstelten demonstrates to fellow students how to shrink-wrap boxes on a pallet on March 14, 2017, at Fort Lee, Virginia. The demonstration was part of training detailing the procedures for receiving and delivering supplies and equipment to customers from a warehouse location. (Photo by Terrance Bell)

- Capturing lessons learned and best practices in the *Division Transportation Officer and Mobility Officer Newsletter*, the Army's publication for deployment professionals.
- Partnering with the Army G-3 and G-4 and Army service component commands to support and evaluate emergency deployment readiness exercises.
- Working with all stakeholders to monitor current deployment information systems, analyze feedback, and develop solutions to support operational units in the Transportation Coordinators' Automated Information for Movements System II and the Cargo Movement Operations System.
- Acting as the proponent for Army deployment, movement control, and terminal doctrine and assisting CASCOM and the Army G-3 and G-4 in formulating policy.
- Acting as the lead for management and execution of the Deployment Excellence Award program.
- Providing modeling expertise for actual or notional deployments, including for reception, staging, onward movement, and integration.

These DPMO actions help ensure the Army continues to refine its force projection ability, as expeditionary capability and capacity become increasingly important to overall unit readiness.

The Office of the Chief of Transportation is the lead for personnel development. Talent management helps deliver efficiencies to the force. The office is working several efforts in conjunction with the Human Resources Command to ensure the Army and the sustainment community are postured for success.

First, the office recognizes the valuable and consistent impact that mentorship has on total Army readiness. The Transportation School has key regimental engagements that bring together retired mentors, transportation leaders, and transportation personnel from across the country.

Second, in support of tactical forces, the office has focused on divisional transportation. The chief of transportation, in conjunction with the Directorate of Logistics and Resource Operations at the Command and General Staff College, is revitalizing the division transportation officer (DTO) elective to ensure it is relevant in order to meet expanding expeditionary requirements.

Each of these specific initiatives will have a direct impact on increasing the organic capabilities of units in the operational force.

The Office of the Chief of Transportation is striving to build a successful DTO team that emphasizes the mobility warrant officer and the DTO sergeant major. It is analyzing the potential of a DTO elective at the Sergeants Major Academy.

The Unit Movement Officer Game is being developed to address training gaps at the unit level and to supplement institutional training. It is an avatar-controlled, scenario-based training platform that will be available through the CASCOM Sustainment Virtual Playbook in May 2018.

Throughout the many exercises it has observed, DPMO has frequently identified as a shortfall the inaccuracy of processed deployment data. This tool will directly improve the accuracy of deployment data and increase the Army's near-term readiness and expeditionary capability.

Ordnance Initiatives

Forward operating base-centric maintenance, supply, and contracted logistics support operations over the past decade have created a false sense of readiness. Augmenting maintenance personnel with contracted logistics support caused technical

skills to atrophy and resulted in more costly maintenance operations and a decline in a sense of ownership of equipment within many units.

Further, professional military education course lengths were reduced to support Army Force Generation. As the Army refocuses its efforts on expeditionary operations and decisive action, leaders must understand that contracted logistics support is not the

best means of building and sustaining readiness.

The use of contracted logistics support must be limited in duration, and it should augment rather than replace organic maintenance and supply capabilities. The unknown and ever-changing environment of the future requires well-trained, well-planned, and well-executed organic maintenance.

The Ordnance School is improving organic maintenance through three initiatives: the Maintenance Readiness Playbook, the DRO Application, and UDIP.

Maintenance Readiness Playbook.

The Maintenance Readiness Playbook will be a web-based, interactive tool delivered to the point of need. It will allow users to follow avatars through realistic motor pool and shop environments, similar to a gaming environment. The training scenarios will simulate field-level maintenance operations and procedures, such as command maintenance, shop operations, and maintenance operations planning.

It will include a broad overview of sustainment-level maintenance. The Maintenance Readiness Playbook is scheduled for completion and delivery.



Spc. Stanley Hays, 508th Quartermaster Company, briefs Maj. Gen. Darrell K. Williams, the commanding general of the Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee, Virginia, on the 9-millimeter Beretta pistol on March 9, 2017. (Photo by Terrance Bell)

ery to the field by the first quarter of FY 2018.

DRO Application. The DRO Application will be available for use on various mobile operating systems and computer-based platforms for the entire Army. After the user selects a towing wrecker and vehicle to be recovered, the application calculates the types of resistance for the recovery operation.

Information for more than 200 vehicle types is stored within the application, which can be accessed without internet connectivity. The DRO Application provides calculations for all aspects of recovery and related materials involved in recovery scenarios for the entire fleet of Army vehicles.

UDIP. The Training and Doctrine Command and Forces Command jointly discovered a skills gap in the diagnostic capabilities of unit maintenance personnel. The UDIP was developed to address this problem. The UDIP is a diagnostics-centric, train-the-trainer program for sergeants and above that delivers enhanced training for the maintainers

of Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, Paladins, and Strykers.

Each platform module includes two weeks of intensive training. The goal is to provide a greater foundation in fault isolation and component repair in order to reduce the “no evidence of failure” rate and decrease the funding required to maintain a high state of readiness during decisive action training.

The UDIP is an interim solution that will be used until an additional two weeks of advanced diagnostics training can be integrated into advanced leader courses for maintainers of the four vehicle platforms.

The Ordnance School, in conjunction with the Army Materiel Command and Forces Command, implemented the UDIP in FY 2016. Since that time, UDIP training has been conducted at several installations and hundreds of Soldiers and leaders have been trained.

These Soldiers now can better conduct organic maintenance and increase their formations’ readiness. The program will continue through FY 2018.

Adjutant General Initiatives

The sustainment community has moved away from using older disjointed accounting and logistics systems to more modern systems, such as the General Fund Enterprise Business System (GFEBS) and GCSS-Army.

It now must also move away from traditional personnel management systems to an all-component, total force talent management ERP system. That system is IPPS-A.

The Army is committed to deploying a personnel system that is transparent, efficient, and comprehensive to meet the needs of today’s total Army. IPPS-A will allow all Soldiers to have 24/7 access to an online self-service portal to view, initiate, and track human resources (HR) and pay actions.

IPPS-A transitions military pay from the FM community to the HR community. It also provides critical capabilities, including visibility across the entire force, increased talent management tools, and secure and efficient auditability in support of congressional requirements.

IPPS-A is being used now. Release 2 in FY 2018 will subsume the functions contained in the Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (the Army National Guard's personnel system) to provide personnel readiness management and essential personnel services.

Release 3 in FY 2019 will enable commanders in all components of the Army to manage their Soldiers effectively. Release 4 in FY 2020 will provide commanders with the ability to electronically approve personnel and pay actions through the web portal 24 hours a day. This will increase efficiency and reduce paperwork processing requirements.

In the current HR environment, many HR systems are outdated, not fully integrated with one another, and stovepiped by function and component. The Standard Installation/Division Personnel System, Regional Level Application Software, and the Electronic Military Personnel Office are prime examples.

Soldiers must go to multiple locations to update information, execute a transaction, or correct errors in pay or promotion actions, and they have no visibility of the process. The result is inefficiency, data inaccuracy, and a support environment that is not optimized for commanders and, most importantly, Soldiers.

IPPS-A will transform the way the Army currently does business by taking advantage of modern technology to reduce the reliance on antiquated, stovepiped systems. As the total force transitions to IPPS-A over the next three to five years, the system will automatically integrate HR and pay actions, reduce errors, ensure greater accountability, enhance readiness, and provide better customer service for Soldiers and families.

The Soldier Support Institute continues to plan for institutional-level training for IPPS-A and advocates for functional training that goes above and beyond NET. It is applying the lessons learned from the fielding of other sustainment ERPs.

The highest Army leaders are com-

mitted to fielding IPPS-A. The sustainment community must continue to lean forward in preparation for IPPS-A, the newest and most long overdue ERP system. For more information about IPPS-A, visit www.ippss-a.army.mil.

FM Initiatives

Over the past year, the Army FM School at Fort Jackson integrated 40 hours of S-8 gunnery training into its FM Captains Career Course, Basic Officer Leader Course, and Senior Leader Course to ensure brigade S-8s are trained and ready to execute their missions in support of readiness.

In 2009, the Army validated the requirement for a dedicated brigade combat team and sustainment brigade S-8 capability. Previously, brigades relied on undertrained personnel to perform resource management functions, which created errors related to funds accountability and audit readiness. Moreover, fielding GFEBS generated additional fiscal processes and resource requirements.

These capability gaps drove the requirements for qualified brigade FM Soldiers who are responsible for operationalizing the commander's fiscal picture and for enhancing stewardship, accountability, and audit readiness. So, the FM School developed, piloted, and launched the new S-8 gunnery training to ensure delivery of FM capabilities.

The development of the S-8 gunnery training was a collaborative effort. The FM School's director of training formed an operational planning team and invited corps, division, and brigade financial managers to help.

The team identified 13 critical battle drills that brigade S-8s must execute routinely to operationalize the commander's fiscal picture, enhance stewardship and accountability, and enable audit readiness.

Each student must demonstrate proficiency in the S-8 battle drills, complete 80 hours of GFEBS provisioning training, and complete appropriate certifications. Furthermore,

when new S-8 Soldiers arrive at a brigade, the division G-8 provides a local orientation, certifies them as mission ready (grants fund certification authority), and continues to coach, teach, and mentor the brigade S-8 team.

To propagate readiness for financial managers at the deputy division G-8 level and below, the FM School developed the 80-hour Financial Managers Essentials Course. This course provides a solid baseline education for deputy G-8s, S-8s, and Department of Defense civilian financial managers.

The course is a pragmatic training approach that capitalizes on a performance-based training model centered on a "fiscal year in the life" and a "day in the life" of a deputy G-8 and a brigade S-8. The course re-creates realistic situations that financial managers working in divisions and brigades experience sequentially and progressively during a fiscal year. A pilot of this functional course will occur in June 2017.

CASCOM and the SCOE are committed to providing operational forces with the best sustainment training, doctrine, and capabilities development and integration to support the Army's number one priority of readiness. In addition to delivering trained sustainers, CASCOM executes on-site support, stays current through regular engagements with the operational force, and develops practical game-changing initiatives for the challenges it finds.

All of these activities contribute directly to improved organic capabilities and the overall readiness of the Army. I encourage all of you to take advantage of the many available resources and learn about other current and future initiatives by visiting <http://www.cascom.army.mil>. Support Starts Here!

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